Sky Field Notes — Stratocumulus Before the Snow

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This set of photographs was taken while rotating slowly and capturing multiple angles of the sky during a winter weather shift. The forecast included strong wind, colder temperatures, and incoming snowfall. The cloud layer visible in these images is consistent with stratocumulus, a low atmospheric cloud type that often forms when cold air moves beneath a moist air layer. Wind and turbulence shape the cloud deck into rounded cells and ridges that resemble waves or quilted textures. Such patterns can create repeating shadows and highlights. When viewed carefully, these textures sometimes resemble faces or other familiar forms — an effect known as pareidolia, the human tendency to recognize patterns such as eyes and expressions in natural environments. Many of the face-like impressions visible in these images only became noticeable after reviewing the photographs. A still image allows the viewer to scan slowly and discover shapes that might not have been obvious in the constantly moving sky. These photographs function as sky field notes: quiet observations of atmospheric texture at a particular moment in time.